

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the above-identified patent application, in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. The presently pending claims are claims 1-17. Claims 1, 14, 15, and 17 have been amended.

In paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 15, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,398,136 to Smith (Smith) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,561,281 to Arnold (Arnold). In response, the Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 15 to better differentiate Applicant's invention from Smith and Arnold. In paragraph 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to include the limitations of claim 17 and the independent claim from which it depends. Claims 2-9 depend from independent claim 1 and recite additional limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. In addition, claim 16 depends from independent claim 15 and recites additional limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 15. Therefore, the withdrawal of the rejection and the allowance of claims 1-9, 15, and 16 is respectfully requested.

In paragraph 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10-12 and 14 under U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith in view of Arnold and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,993,650 to Badberg (Badberg). In response, the Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 14 to better differentiate Applicant's invention from Smith and Badberg. Claim 1 and 14 have both been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 17. Claims 10-12 depend from amended

independent claim 1 and recite additional limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. Therefore, the withdrawal of the rejection and the allowance of claims 10-12 and 14 is respectfully requested.

In paragraph 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 12-14 under U.S. C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith in view of Arnold and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 551,527 to Cunningham (Cunningham). In response, the Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 14 to better differentiate Applicant's invention from Smith, Arnold, and Cunningham. As discussed above, claims 1 and 14 have been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 17.

Claims 12 and 13 depend from amended independent claim 1 and recite additional limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. Therefore, the withdrawal of the rejection and the allowance of claims 12-14 is respectfully requested.

In paragraph 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6 and 10-16 under U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Badberg in view of Arnold. In response, the Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14, and 15 to better differentiate Applicant's invention from Badberg and Arnold. Claims 1, 14, and 15 have been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 17.

Claims 1-6 and 10-13 depend from amended independent claim 1 and recite additional limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. Claim 16 depends from amended independent claim 15 and recites additional limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 16. Therefore, the withdrawal of the rejection and the allowance of claims 1-6 and 10-16 is respectfully requested.

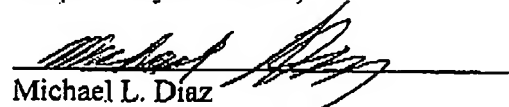
In paragraph 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 7-9 under U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Badberg in view of Arnold and further in view of Smith. In response, the Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to better differentiate Applicant's invention from the cited references. As discussed above, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of objected claim 17. Claims 7-9 depend from amended independent claim 1 and recite additional limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. Therefore, the withdrawal of the rejection and the allowance of claims 7-9 is respectfully requested.

In paragraph 8, the Examiner objected to claim 17 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14, and 15 to include the limitations of claim 17. In addition, claim 17 has been amended to depend from amended independent claim 1 with additional limitations. Therefore, the withdrawal of the objection and the allowance of claim 17 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For all the above reasons, the Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection and the allowance of claims 1-17.

Respectfully submitted,


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